

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGEDY OF THE M.S. ST. LOUIS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from consideration of S. Res. 111 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 111) recognizing June 6, 2009, as the 70th anniversary of the tragic date when the M.S. St. Louis, a ship carrying Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, returned to Europe after its passengers were refused admittance to the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today the Senate remembers a moment in history when the United States failed to provide refuge to slightly more than 900 individuals fleeing religious and racial persecution in Nazi Germany. S. Res. 111 acknowledges the 70th anniversary of the date, June 6, 1939, when the M.S. St. Louis, a German ocean liner, started its return voyage to Europe with nearly all of its original passengers. Later, over 250 of those individuals would perish in the Holocaust.

The story starts on May 13, 1939, when the M.S. St. Louis sailed from Hamburg, Germany, to Havana, Cuba with 937 passengers, mostly Jewish refugees, searching for freedom and safety. State-supported anti-Semitism including violent pogroms, expulsion from public schools and services, and arrest and imprisonment solely because of Jewish heritage forced those passengers to leave their homes.

When the M.S. St. Louis arrived in Havana, the Cuban Government allowed only 28 passengers to disembark. Corruption and political maneuvering within the Cuban Government invalidated the transit visas of the other passengers. Before returning to Europe, the ship sailed toward Miami hoping for a solution. The ship sailed so close to Florida that the passengers could see the lights of Miami. One survivor remembers his father commenting that "Florida's golden shores, so near, might as well be 4,000 miles away for all the good it did them."

The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1924 strictly limited the number of immigrants admitted to the United States each year and in 1939 the waiting list for German-Austrian immigration was several years long. While the press and citizens were largely sympathetic to the passengers' plight, no extraordinary measures were taken to permit the refugees to enter the United States. The passengers were told that they must "await their turns on the waiting list and qualify for and obtain immigration visas."

On June 6, 1939, the M.S. St. Louis sailed back to Europe with nearly all of its original passengers. The passengers obtained refuge in Great Britain, the

Netherlands, Belgium, and France. World War II started 3 months later and those countries, with the exception of Great Britain, fell to Nazi occupation. Two hundred and fifty-four of those passengers died during the Holocaust and many others suffered under Nazi persecution and in concentration camps.

S. Res. 111 acknowledges the 70th anniversary of the return voyage of the M.S. St. Louis and honors the memory of those passengers including the 254 who died during the Holocaust. The St. Louis is only one tragedy out of millions from that time, but seventy years later, it still haunts us as a nation and deserves recognition.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 111) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 111

Whereas on May 13, 1939, the ocean liner M.S. St. Louis departed from Hamburg, Germany for Havana, Cuba with 937 passengers, most of whom were Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution;

Whereas the Nazi regime in Germany in the 1930s implemented a program of violent persecution of Jews;

Whereas the Kristallnacht, or Night of Broken Glass, pogrom of November 9 through 10, 1938, signaled an increase in violent anti-Semitism;

Whereas after the Cuban Government, on May 27, 1939, refused entry to all except 28 passengers on board the M.S. St. Louis, the M.S. St. Louis proceeded to the coast of south Florida in hopes that the United States would accept the refugees;

Whereas the United States refused to allow the M.S. St. Louis to dock and thereby provide a haven for the Jewish refugees;

Whereas the Immigration Act of 1924 placed strict limits on immigration;

Whereas a United States Coast Guard cutter patrolled near the M.S. St. Louis to prevent any passengers from jumping to freedom;

Whereas following denial of admittance of the passengers to Cuba, the United States, and Canada, the M.S. St. Louis set sail on June 6, 1939, for return to Antwerp, Belgium with the refugees; and

Whereas 254 former passengers of the M.S. St. Louis died under Nazi rule: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that June 6, 2009, marks the 70th anniversary of the tragic date when the M.S. St. Louis returned to Europe after its passengers were refused admittance to the United States and other countries in the Western Hemisphere;

(2) honors the memory of the 937 refugees aboard the M.S. St. Louis, most of whom were Jews fleeing Nazi oppression, and 254 of whom subsequently died during the Holocaust;

(3) acknowledges the suffering of those refugees caused by the refusal of the United States, Cuban, and Canadian governments to provide them political asylum; and

(4) recognizes the 70th anniversary of the M.S. St. Louis tragedy as an opportunity for public officials and educators to raise awareness about an important historical event, the lessons of which are relevant to current and future generations.

HONORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 154.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 154) honoring the entrepreneurial spirit of small business concerns in the United States during National Small Business Week, beginning May 17, 2009.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, there be no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 154) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 154

Whereas the approximately 27,200,000 small business concerns in the United States are the driving force behind the Nation's economy, creating more than 93 percent of all net new jobs and generating more than 50 percent of the Nation's non-farm gross domestic product;

Whereas small businesses play an integral role in rebuilding the Nation's economy;

Whereas Congress has emphasized the importance of small businesses by improving access to capital through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009;

Whereas small business concerns are the Nation's innovators, serving to advance technology and productivity;

Whereas small business concerns represent 97 percent of all exporters and produce 29 percent of exported goods;

Whereas Congress established the Small Business Administration in 1953 to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small business concerns in order to preserve free and competitive enterprise, to ensure that a fair proportion of the total purchases, contracts, and subcontracts for property and services for the Federal Government are placed with small business concerns, to make certain that a fair proportion of the total sales of Government property are made to such small business concerns, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the Nation;

Whereas the Small Business Administration has helped small business concerns with access to critical lending opportunities, protected small business concerns from excessive Federal regulatory enforcement, played